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Policies

China's key political meetings secure pivotal underpinning for all-round well-off society

[Xinhua, 15-03-2019] As the "two sessions," a key event in China's political calendar, came to an end Friday, the country has created decisive underpinning for navigating through complexities toward its goal to build a moderately prosperous society (Xiaokang) in all respects.

The second sessions of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) and the 13th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) were convened in a crucial year for China as it has set 2020 as the target year to achieve Xiaokang, with extreme poverty eradicated.

At the closing meeting of the NPC session, nearly 3,000 legislators approved a resolution on the government work report, which set new targets for sustained economic and social development in 2019.

They adopted China's first unified foreign investment law as well as an array of other resolutions to deepen reform and opening up.

Click [here](#) for details

China adopts foreign investment law

[Xinhua, 15-03-2019] China's national legislature on Friday 15th March passed the foreign investment law, a landmark legislation that will provide stronger protection and a better business environment for overseas investors.

With unified provisions for the entry, promotion, protection, and management of foreign investment, it is a new and fundamental law for foreign investment in China.

It aims to improve the transparency of foreign investment policies and ensure that foreign-invested enterprises participate in market competition on an equal basis.

The law will become effective on Jan. 1, 2020.

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Xi stresses implementation of rural revitalization strategy

[Xinhua, 08-03-2019] Chinese President Xi Jinping called for more efforts to implement the rural revitalization strategy with the chief goal to modernize agriculture and rural areas.

"The top task for implementing the rural revitalization strategy is to ensure supply of important farm produce, grain in particular," said Xi.

He made the remarks when joining deliberation with deputies from Henan Province at the second session of the 13th National People's Congress, China's national legislature.

Efforts should be made to promote the supply-side structural reform in the agricultural sector to achieve food security while building a modern and efficient agriculture, Xi added.

Xi also called for enhanced protection of agriculture ecological environment and prevention and treatment of pollution in rural areas.

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China to expand opening-up in agriculture, mining, manufacturing, service sectors

[Xinhua, 06-03-2019] China will roll out more opening measures in the agriculture, mining, manufacturing and service sectors, and allow wholly foreign funded enterprises to operate in more sectors, a senior official of the country's top economic planner said.

The government will further shorten the negative list which outlines fields off-limits to foreign investors, Ning Jizhe, deputy director of the National Development and Reform Commission, told a press conference on the sidelines of the annual legislative session.

A new list outlining industries that encourage foreign investment will be released this year, Ning said.

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China moves to tackle financing difficulties in rural, poor regions

[Xinhua, 09-03-2019] China's banking and insurance regulator has released a document to encourage financial support for agriculture, rural areas, farmers and poverty relief.

Banks will be required to fulfill special lending targets, including faster increases in loans to agriculture, rural areas and farmers than average lending growth and steady expansion in outstanding rural loans, according to the China Banking and Insurance Regulatory Commission.

Efforts should also be made to direct more funds to poverty-stricken regions and to ensure more rapid lending growth in this regard.

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China's rural revitalization train is full steam ahead

[Xinhua, 09-03-2019] In addition to education and healthcare, China has announced plans to install or renovate toilets for 10 million rural households in 30,000 villages this year. The fund allocation by the central government is expected to be 7 billion yuan (about 1.04 billion U.S. dollars).

Toilet revolution is just part of a much grander rural revitalization strategy, first put forward during the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2017 and repeatedly stressed by the Chinese leadership since then.

The strategy aims at achieving the basic modernization of agriculture and rural areas by 2035, and the grand goal of a strong agriculture, a beautiful countryside and well-off farmers by 2050.

To guarantee its national food security and improve its agricultural competitiveness, China will have more high-standard farmland, install more efficient water conservation facilities, and use more advanced agricultural equipment.

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Fund to be created for restoring environment

[China daily, 20-03-2019] China's top court said it plans to help build a national fund for environmental restoration with other authorities this year to fight pollution and implement suggestions from top legislative and political advisers.

As punishments against polluters have increased in recent years, the Supreme People's Court has also received advice from deputies to the National People's Congress on building the fund, according to Wang Xuguang, chief judge of the top court's environmental division.

He said the top court would speed up coordination with other government departments, such as those concerned with finance and environmental protection - together with prosecuting authorities - to establish the fund this year.

Click [here](#) for details

Science, Technology and Environment

Rotating use of farmland will bring a harvest of new growth

[China daily, 19-03-2019] China announced that the area of farmland designated to cultivate different crops or lay fallow will increase to 2 million hectares this year, 25 percent more than last year, a move that experts said will help promote sustainable agriculture by giving the soil a break to recover from overuse and pollution.

The central government will subsidize 2 million hectares of farmland that will either lie fallow for one year or rotate between corn or soybean, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs said.

The announcement was the latest move of a pilot program to rotate or lie fallow some farmland which was started in 2016 by the Ministry of Agriculture, the predecessor of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, and other nine State Council departments.

Click [here](#) for details

Driverless tractors, farmerless farms: China explores precision agriculture

[Xinhua, 28-03-2019] From northwestern Xinjiang to Jiansanjiang, a major grain growing base in northeastern Heilongjiang Province, to an automated farm in Xinghua, eastern Jiangsu Province, China is exploring precision agriculture, a new way of farming that might one day lead to no farmers.

As more people move to the cities, getting skilled labor is a major challenge in agriculture. The Global Harvest Initiative in the United States estimated that from 2005 to 2019, the agriculture workforce fell by 58 million people or 11 percent.

Meanwhile, severe weather caused by climate change is expected to affect crop yields. How to feed the growing population with fewer workers while adapting to changing weather? Precision agriculture is emerging as the answer.

Click [here](#) for details

China aims high in afforestation

[Xinhua, 12-03-2019] China's forestry authority has initiated an annual national campaign to encourage Chinese to go out in spring to plant more trees and turn the country green.

The forest coverage rate of China has increased nearly 10 percentage points since the late 1970s, with the world's largest area of planted forests and an 80-percent expansion of forest areas.

In 2018 alone, China planted 7.07 million hectares of new forests and treated more than 6.66 million hectares of degraded grasslands, according to a communique on China's afforestation conditions.

Under a long-term afforestation plan, China expects to increase its forest coverage rate to 23.04 percent by 2020, and to 26 percent by 2035, as part of the plan to build a Beautiful China.

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China calls on private sector to beef up investment in basic science

[SCMP, 11-03-2019] Beijing has called on the private sector to beef up its investment in basic research, which is seen as a foundation for China to cut its reliance on foreign technology and achieve its ambition of becoming a global tech superpower.

China's Ministry of Science and Technology pledged to encourage local governments and enterprises to fund more projects focused on scientific research and development in spite of a slowing economy.

"China will invest more in basic research," said Science and Technology Minister Wang Zhigang during the ongoing National People's Congress in Beijing on Monday, adding that his ministry will seek to motivate local governments, enterprises and industries to boost their investment in this area.

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Bayer will continue to support green and digital development of China's agriculture

[China daily, 01-03-2019] German company Bayer's agriculture division Bayer Crop Science in China and China's National Agricultural Technology Extension Service Center (NATESC) under the Ministry of Agriculture jointly launched the Action Plan for Enhancing Green Development Capability in Beijing.

The plan, a large non-profit training project co-sponsored by Bayer and the NATESC, is an important topic under the framework of Sino-German agricultural cooperation.

To respond to the needs of green and quality development in Chinese agriculture, it aims to build green development capacities among key players, such as local officials and technicians in agriculture, executives in new types of agribusinesses, serve organizations and lead in co-operatives.

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NEX China takes the express for healthy food together with natural extract enterprises

[PRNewswire, 04-03-2019] In recent years, big health has risen as a national policy of China with the introduction of the "*Healthy China 2030*" *Planning Outline*, and China has specified the new positioning of the nutrition and health food industry. The market size of the Chinese health food industry is expected to reach about RMB403.6 billion in 2020. The active natural extracts have played a vital role in the process of acceleration of the entire nutrition and health food industry and the gradual maturity of the market, and the flourishing of the nutrition and health food industry has brought the steadily growing demand for the natural extract industry.

Click [here](#) for details

New study finds how pesticide exposure causes obesity

[Xinhua, 03-07-2017] A new study has found that the use of pesticides increases the risk of developing obesity by impairing gut and gut microbiota.

Chlorpyrifos has been a residential insecticide since the late 19th century, and it is still among the most commonly used type of pesticide around the world due to its ideal bioactivity.

Previous studies show that exposure to the pesticide may cause obesity and diabetes, but the underlying mechanism of how it works remains unknown.

Researchers from China Agriculture University focused on the human gut microbiota, the most important micro-ecosystem in the body.

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Yunnan to build elephant 'dining area' to solve human-elephant conflicts

[CGTN, 10-03-2019] Southwest China's Yunnan Province will build a "dining area" for wild Asian elephants to solve conflicts between the endangered animal and local residents.

The dining area will be located in a 137.5-hectare habitat area for 18 wild Asian elephants in Menghai County of Dai Autonomous Prefecture of Xishuangbanna, which also overlaps with the 35,000 people from 13 villages who live there.

An elephant habitat reconstruction project will also be launched, while the 51-hectare dining area will grow corn, sugarcane, bamboo and bananas.

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Trade and Business

China, UK will both benefit from free trade deal

[GT, 110-03-2019] Against the backdrop of a worsening international economic environment, China needs to find solutions as soon as possible in case more Western countries unite against it on some major economic issues. The country should pay attention to deepening bilateral relations with important economic and trade partners by building a more comprehensive and high-standard free trade network. And the UK could be one of the developed countries with which China could strengthen economic cooperation in a new round of changes to the international economic order.

As the fifth-largest global economy, and the second-largest economy in the EU, the UK is an important window for China to deepen cooperation with the Western world. Beijing can consider a China-UK free trade area (FTA) as a model for deals with other developed countries.

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Beijing horticultural expo set to wow global visitors

[Xinhua, 29-03-2019] A month away from the 2019 Beijing International Horticultural Exhibition, workers are busy making final touches to the expo pavilions and gardens to ensure they will shine during the global event.

Slated to kick off on April 29, the 162-day expo is poised to impress an expected number of 16 million visitors from home and abroad with a huge collection of plants, flowers and eye-catching pavilions as well as ideas for green development.

More than 110 countries and international organizations as well as over 120 non-official exhibitors have confirmed participation, marking the highest attendance in the expo's history.

Click [here](#) for details

More young farmers shop for agricultural materials online

[China Daily, 26-03-2019] China has more young farmers who prefer to buy agricultural materials online, according to a recent report released by e-commerce giant Alibaba.

Alibaba launched a promotion campaign on agricultural production resources on its e-commerce platform Taobao from March 1 to 20.

Statistics from Alibaba showed that the number of farmers who bought farm equipment, tools as well as fertilizer on the platform during the promotion has risen 120 percent from a year ago, according to the report.

It also noted that over 60 percent of the farmers engaged in the promotion were born in 1980s, while an increasing number of farmers born in 1990s have been involved in the agricultural sector.

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China's catering industry exceeds 4 trln yuan in 2018

[Xinhua, 17-03-2019] China's food and beverage (F&B) industry posted a record high of 4.27 trillion yuan (636 billion U.S. dollars) in revenue in 2018, the China Cuisine Association said Sunday 17th March.

The F&B industry revenue accounted for 11.2 percent of the total volume of retail sales last year, up 0.4 percentage points from 2017, said Jiang Junxian, president of the association.

The F&B industry also contributed 20.9 percent to consumption growth in 2018, he said.

Shandong, Guangdong, Jiangsu, Hebei and Henan provinces saw an F&B industry revenue of more than 300 billion yuan last year, with Shandong ranking first.

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10th China Flower Expo launch under way

[Shanghai daily, 20-03-2019] Chongming District marked the 800-day countdown to the 10th China Flower Expo, to be held from May 21 till July 2 in 2021, under the theme of “Blossom with a Chinese Dream.”

The expo is divided into five parts, three of which are expo gardens, Dongping National Forest Park, southern service area and northern service area.

The core area is a paradise of butterflies and Chinese peony. One highlight is the main flower avenue. Six pavilions are housed in the structure of five subsidiary ones surrounding a main one.

Construction and planting will be finished early next year.

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Outbreak of African Swine Fever in China

Agriculture ministry sets compensation for pigs killed due to virus

[China Daily, 01-04-2019] The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs said over the weekend that hog producers affected by African swine fever are now eligible for compensation of 1,200 yuan (\$180) for each pig slaughtered due to the contagious virus.

Local authorities are encouraged to refine their compensation regulations in accordance with the specific size and breed of hogs that have been culled due to disease outbreaks, according to the Ministry.

The universal standard for the amount of compensation payment varies between 50 to 100 percent of market prices. The 1,200-yuan-per-head pay is about 75 percent of the average hog price in China, the Ministry said, adding that the amount was jointly decided with the Ministry of Finance.

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Chinese researchers isolate African swine fever virus

[China daily, 26-03-2019] Chinese researchers have successfully isolated an African swine fever virus, which could contribute to more knowledge of the organism, and may lead to new methods for prevention and control, according to a research institute in northeastern China.

The virus, called Pig/HLJ/18, was isolated from a sample taken from an animal at a farm hit by an African swine fever outbreak last year in Jiamusi, Heilongjiang province.

Studies showed that the virus is virulent and transmissible among domestic pigs, the Harbin Veterinary Research Institute said in a statement over the weekend.

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China supports pig raising to reduce impact of African swine fever

[Xinhua, 22-03-2019] China's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs has urged supportive measures for pig farms to reduce the impact of outbreaks of African swine fever on the country's pork supply.

Local authorities should put in place relative subsidies, financial rewards and insurances to help the affected pig farms resume production, according to a guideline released by the ministry.

In addition to existing policies, provisional allowances should be provided as soon as possible for pig farms, and banks should strengthen credit support for them, according to the guideline.

Outbreaks of African swine fever have reduced the production capacity of pork since the second half of last year, though the disease has been kept under control.

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China's pork imports to double in 2019 as swine fever hits local output

[Reuters, 21-03-2019]China's 2019 pork imports are set to double from last year to 2 million tonnes, a Rabobank analyst said on 21 March, as African swine fever hits production of the meat in the world's top hog market.

African swine fever, which does not harm humans, has a high mortality rate in pigs and has no vaccine or cure.

Chinese pork production will fall by up to 20 percent in 2019, Oscar Tjakra, a director of food and agribusiness research at Rabobank, told a conference in the east of the country. China typically accounts for around half the world's output of the meat.

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African swine fever outbreaks in March 2019

Date	Location	Details
7 March	Gangnan District, Guigang City, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous	Click here for details
12 March	Found in a pig carrying lorry, in Linshui County, Sichuan Province	Click here for details
21 March	Shizhu County, Chongqing City	Click here for details
30 March	Lichuan City, Hubei Province	Click here for details

African swine fever restrictions lifted in March 2019

Date	Location	Details
5 March	Yongning County, Yinchuan City, Ningxia Hui Autonomous	Click here for details
5 March	Qilihe District, Lanzhou City, Gansu Province	Click here for details
23 March	Yong Zhou City, Hunan Province	Click here for details

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